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New York Daily News _____
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Date 12 JAN 89

CIA Chief Says Good Progress in Bombing Probe; Soviets Might Help
WASHINGTON (AP) Investigators are making good progress in probing the bombing of a Pan Am jumbo jet last month, CIA Director William Webster said in an interview published today, and he thinks Soviet intelligence agents would pass on any tip they might have on who is responsible.

The leads are very encouraging. We've come a long way in understanding what caused the crash'' in Scotland that killed 270 people Dec. 21, Webster told USA Today.

We understand the nature of the (explosive) device and we already have a good reading on those organizations that were capable of acquiring I don't want to say manufacturing such a device and getting it through the security gates that are in place to protect international traveling,'' he said.

There's a real determination to stay with this,'' he added.

But, the intelligence chief said, ``I can't tell you when or how soon'' the case will be broken.

Middle Eastern terrorist groups have claimed responsibility for the Pan Am bombing, in which a plastic explosive was placed in a forward cargo hold in the Boeing 747 jumbo jet.

USA Today said Webster, asked whether the government of Libya was suspect, hesitated for 10 seconds and then said: ``I don't think we're in a position to say that.''

Asked about the possibility that Soviet intelligence agents might pass on a tip as to who was responsible for the bombing, Webster replied: ``I would guess they would.''

It's a view that I have held that conflicts with many who have thought that the Soviet Union was monolithically responsible for most of the terrorism around the world, particularly a decade ago,'' he continued.

To whatever extent their involvement in training and supplying and shielding terrorists a decade ago may have been true,'' factors such as President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's desire to give the Soviet Union a world leadership role have changed that, Webster suggested.

We've has intimations of a desire of the Soviets to work in the world arena to reduce the threat of terrorism,'' he said.